

► Sunday, September 7, 2008, Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ez 33:7-9; Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9; Rom 13:8-10; Mt 18:15-20

Week #3: Main Theme: True freedom is love that is guided by truth.

All you need is love, St. Paul tells us in the letter to the Romans. But he also makes clear that love entails following God's commandments. They are not a bunch of "thou shalt not's," a bunch of random rules from a kill-joy God. Rather, they are the laws that lead to happiness. Moral laws are as necessary to our human flourishing as the natural "laws" (such as gravity) that God has put in place in our world. Freedom is not the ability to do whatever we please, acting out of emotion rather than out of intelligence; that is actually slavery to our desires. Freedom is being free enough to give ourselves away, even when it is hard.

This is why God urges us in the book of Ezekiel to dissuade those who are following a path of unhappiness by not following God's law. Jesus reinforces this lesson. God loves each person into existence. The Father has created us for no other reason than to share His happiness with us. The natural moral law is the path to this happiness of eternal love. This is why the Church never ceases to proclaim even unpopular truths, such as the truth of human sexuality being reserved for marriage. Married love is designed to be lifelong and life-giving, and only in this way can sexual love be real love. Let us recommit ourselves to evangelizing our culture on these important truths!

Bulletin: "Christian faith and ethics are not meant to stifle love, but to make it healthier, stronger and more truly free."

Pope Benedict XVI, Fifth World Meeting of Families, Valencia, Spain, 7/8/2006

Suggested bulletin insert: "Marriage: God's Loving Plan for Sex"